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MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION ACT
PRAISED BY SECRETARY JARDINE

New Law, Passed Unanimously by Both Houses of Congress,
Called One of the Greatest Conservation
Measures Ever Enacted

Secretary Jardine, of the United States Department of Agriculture, considers that the Norbeck-Andresen migratory-bird refuge bill, which has just been enacted into law by a unanimous vote of both branches of the 70th Congress and by approval of the President on February 18, is one of the most important wild-life conservation measures that have been written on the statute books of any nation. The outstanding exception is the related migratory-bird treaty act of 1918, which the present law is designed to supplement. Both laws were passed to carry out the obligations of the United States under the treaty with Great Britain to protect the wild birds that fly back and forth each year from Canada, and both will be administered by the Bureau of Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture.

"The new law," explained the Secretary, "gives additional force and effect to the earlier measure by providing Federal funds for the survey, purchase, and establishment of large areas throughout the entire country to be maintained as inviolate sanctuaries--feeding, nesting, and resting grounds where forever the migrating species of birds may enjoy complete protection.

"The measure as passed is a national acknowledgment of the tremendous importance of the birds of America as aids in the development of agriculture. It acknowledges also the will of the American people to give adequate protection to the beautiful and harmless creatures that are heard in season from every forest, copse, and hedgerow in the land. And it further recognizes the importance of the migratory game birds as a food supply and primarily as an incentive to the healthful sport, outdoor study, and recreational activity

so essential in the development of a sturdy American manhood.

"The act definitely strengthens the arm of the Federal Government in its sound, constructive, and progressive policy of bird protection. Civilization and the advance of industry, which have often been ruthless in their disregard of the needs of the wild creatures, are influences that from year to year have decreased the water and marsh areas of the country by many thousands of square miles in the aggregate. It is evident that close seasons, bag limits, and restrictions imposed upon the gunners of America by the game laws will all prove ultimately ineffectual to perpetuate our birds if the destruction of their habitat is allowed to continue unchecked.

"Far-sighted sportsmen, conservationists, and nature lovers throughout the country have long recognized the major elements of the problem and have endeavored to arouse the public to a realization of the impending disaster that must surely have befallen the migratory birds but for the timely passage of this Act. The idea in some form or other has been before Congress for six years, but the various bills introduced from time to time and intended to provide relief have failed of passage in one or both houses because certain provisions have lacked the approval of the combined groups that were demanding adequate and comprehensive legislation well supported with necessary funds.

"The public-shooting-grounds feature in earlier bills caused much dissension, as did the provision that would require a Federal license fee from every person who hunted migratory game birds. These and other doubtful provisions were finally eliminated, and the resulting measure at once had the endorsement and approval of the entire country.

"The National Committee on Wild Life Legislation, an influential group of men representing practically every national conservation organization in America, the National Federation of Women's Clubs, and other bodies, as well as an uncounted number of individuals, gave full and effective support to the measure. Thus, with champions of the cause in all parts of the country and in both houses of Congress, to press the matter, the perfected bill received unanimous approval.

"The Biological Survey, the bureau of the Department of Agriculture that administers the Federal activities relative to migratory birds, estimates that

100 to 125 refuges will eventually be needed. These will be located in suitable areas in all parts of the country. The exact locations of the great system of refuges will closely follow the main migratory flight lines and concentration areas. These matters will be finally determined after a thorough survey has been carried out by the experts of the department as provided for in the Act.

"Authorization is made for \$75,000, which if appropriated is to become available on July 1, 1929, for use in preliminary surveys. In 1930 the amount authorized to be available will be \$200,000, and in 1931 \$600,000, for surveys and the acquisition of lands for refuges. For six years following 1931 an annual appropriation of \$1,000,000 is authorized. At the close of this period it is anticipated that sufficient areas will have been procured to care for the more pressing and essential needs of the birds. Annual appropriations of \$200,000 are authorized thereafter to pay the costs of maintaining and patrolling the established refuges, to protect the birds from poachers and predatory creatures, to control disease when possible, and to encourage the production of natural foods.

"The Migratory Bird Refuge Act strengthens immeasurably the legislation already enacted by Congress designed to perpetuate, foster, and protect the migratory birds of America. While adhering to the established principle that these species by reason of their migratory nature are wards of Uncle Sam, it allows and encourages the full cooperation of the individual States in the tasks, responsibilities, and benefits of the progressive program.

"Without the Refuge Act to support the provisions of earlier Federal legislation it is difficult to conceive how our birds--the ducks, the geese, and the myriad species of song birds and insect destroyers--could for long withstand or survive in satisfactory numbers the encroachments of industry and the losses sustained by indiscriminate shooting on practically every feeding ground in the country. The Act virtually guarantees to all generations of Americans yet to come an undiminished share of that marvelous heritage of bird life which Nature has bestowed upon our country. Americans may well call down blessings upon the heads of those whose love of nature, whose far-sightedness, and whose practical common sense generously exercised in the adjustment of a difficult problem have made a splendid law possible."